

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims as follows.

Claims 1-67. (Canceled)

68. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vaccinia virus vector comprising a vector sequence, a promotor selected from the group consisting of a eukaryotic promoter and a viral promoter, said promoter being operatively linked to a nucleic sequence to allow expression of an HCV single or specifically oligomerized E1 envelope viral protein, with said nucleotide sequence being characterised further in that it encodes a single HCV E1 protein starting in the region between amino acid positions 117 and 192 and ending in the region between amino acid positions 285 ~~250~~ and 400.

69. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vector vaccinia comprising a vector sequence, a promotor selected from the group consisting of a eukaryotic promoter and a viral promoter, said promoter being operatively linked to a nucleic sequence to allow expression of an HCV single or specifically oligomerized E1 envelope viral protein, with said nucleotide sequence being characterised further in that it encodes a single HCV E1 protein starting in the region between amino acid positions 117 and 192 and ending in the region between amino acid positions 285 ~~263~~ and 326 ~~400~~, and wherein said recombinant vector is a vector for recombinant expression of a recombinant HCV single or specifically oligomerized E1 envelope viral protein in lower eukaryotic or mammalian host cells.

70. (Currently Amended) The recombinant vector according to claim 68 wherein said nucleotide sequence comprises a sequence encoding an HCV leader sequence attached before a sequence encoding an HCV envelope E1 protein starting at amino acid position 192~~A recombinant vector comprising a vector sequence, a promoter selected from the group consisting of a eukaryotic promoter and a viral promoter, said promoter being operatively linked to a nucleic sequence to allow expression of an HCV single or specifically oligomerized E1 envelope viral protein, with said nucleotide sequence being characterised further in that it encodes a single HCV E1 protein bearing a deletion of the first hydrophobic domain between positions 264 to 293, plus or minus 8 amino acids.~~

Claims 71-72. (Canceled)

73. (Currently Amended) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 68-70 and 102, with said nucleotide sequence further comprising operably linked a 5'-terminal ATG codon and a 3'-terminal stop codon.

74. (Currently Amended) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 68-70 and 102 with said nucleotide sequence being characterised further in that a factor Xa cleavage site and/or 3 to 10, preferably 6, histidine codons have been added 3'-terminally to the coding region.

Claim 75. (Canceled)

76. (Previously Presented) A recombinant vector comprising a vector sequence, a promotor selected from the group consisting of a eukaryotic promoter and a viral promoter, said promoter being operatively linked to a nucleic sequence to allow expression of an HCV single or specifically oligomerized E1 envelope viral protein, said nucleotide sequence being characterised further in that at least one of the glycosylation sites present in said E1 has been removed at the nucleic acid level.

Claims 77-78. (Canceled)

79. (Currently Amended) A composition comprising a recombinant vector according to any one of claims 68-70, 76, ~~and 95~~ and 102 .

Claims 80-84. (Canceled)

85. (Previously Presented) A method for immunizing a mammal comprising administering a composition of claim 79 to said mammal.

86. (Previously Presented) The composition according to claim 79, further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable adjuvant.

87. (Currently Amended) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 69-70, 76, ~~and 95~~ and 102, with said vector being characterized as a live recombinant vector.

88. (Currently Amended) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 69-70, 76, ~~and 95~~ and 102 wherein said vector is a vaccinia virus vector.

89. (Currently Amended) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 69-70, 76, ~~and 95~~ and 102 wherein said vector is avipox.

90. (Currently Amended) The recombinant vector according to any one of claims 69-70, 76, ~~and 95~~ and 102 wherein said vector is Ankara Modified Virus (AMV).

Claims 91-94. (Canceled)

95. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vector comprising any of the sequences as represented by SEQ ID NOs: 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, ~~21, 23, 25, 27, 29~~, 31, or an epitope encoding part ~~parts~~ thereof.

96. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vector of any one of claims 68-70, 76 ~~and 77~~ and 102 wherein said nucleotide sequence is a nucleotide sequence represented by SEQ ID NOs: 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, ~~21, 23, 25, 27, 29~~, 31, or an epitope encoding part ~~parts~~ thereof.

97. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vector of claim 69 wherein said nucleotide sequence is a nucleotide sequence represented by SEQ ID NOs:7, 9, 11, 13, 23, 29, 31, or an epitope encoding part ~~parts~~ thereof.

Claims 98-101. (Canceled)

102. (new) The recombinant vector according to claim 69 wherein said nucleotide sequence comprises a sequence encoding an HCV leader sequence attached before a sequence encoding an HCV envelope E1 protein starting at amino acid position 192.